

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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P R 191741Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4511

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS EFIS EC US

SUBJECT: STARKIST REPRESENTATIVE DISCUSSES ASSOCIATION CONCEPT
WITH GOE MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES

1. SUMMARY: ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, STARKIST REP DISCUSSED PROSPECTS FOR ASSOCIATION CONTRACT WITH MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES, REAR ADMIRAL LUIS SALAZAR LANDETA, AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 18. WHILE BASICALLY NON-COMMITTAL, SALAZAR REQUESTED THAT STARKIST SUBMIT A WRITTEN PROPOSAL GIVING GENERAL OUTLINE OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT. SALAZAR ALSO EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO MEET SENIOR STARKIST OFFICIALS WHO APPARENTLY PLAN TO VISIT QUITO IN NEAR FUTURE. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, STARKIST REP REQUESTS THAT CONTENTS THIS MESSAGE NOT BE MADE KNOWN TO ITS COMPETITORS. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOMPANIED BY POLCOUNS, STARKIST REP ANTHONY NIZETICH CALLED ON GOE MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES, REAR ADMIRAL LUIS SALAZAR LANDETA, FEBRUARY 18TH, FOR DISCUSSION OF MATTERS RELATED TO FISHING BOAT SEIZURES. ALSO PARTICIPATING IN CONVERSATION WERE FISHERIES SUBSECRETARY CAPTAIN ETIEL RODRIGUEZ TAPIA AND AN UNIDENTIFIED NAVAL AIDE TO THE MINISTER.

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3. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO MAKE ONE LAST ATTEMPT

TO SECURE ONE-TIME EXCEPTION TO BAN ON ISSUANCE OF LICENSES TO FOREIGN-FLAG VESSELS OVER 600 NRT SO THAT OCEAN QUEEN AND A.K. STROM COULD FISH AFTER BEING RELEASED. REQUEST HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN MADE ORALLY TO SUBSECRETARY FOR FISHERIES BY NIZETICH AT MEETING ALSO ATTENDED BY POLCOUNS FEBRUARY 13. THIS, AT SUBSECRETARY'S SUGGESTION, WAS FOLLOWED BY REQUEST IN WRITING BY NIZETICH DIRECTLY TO MINISTER, WHO IN TURN REJECTED REQUEST IN WRITING HIMSELF. NIZETICH NONETHELESS FELT THAT HE SHOULD EXHAUST EVERY POSSIBLE REMEDY BEFORE RETURNING TO US AT END OF WEEK AND WITH EMBASSY ASSISTANCE SECURED APPOINTMENT TO MEET PERSONALLY WITH MINISTER.

4. NIZETICH OPENED MEETING BY EXPLAINING THAT NEW GOE PENALTIES FOR UNLICENSED FISHING CONFRONTED HIS COMPANY AND BOAT OWNERS WITH NEW SITUATION. NEW FINES AND PENALTIES WERE OUT OF SIGHT AND SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION AND AVOID RECURRENCE OF RECENT EVENTS. WHEN NEW GOE RULES HAD COME OUT IN DECEMBER, STARKIST HAD IN FACT TOLD ITS CAPTAINS (AND THOSE FISHING UNDER CONTRACT FOR THE COMPANY) TO BUY LICENSES; BUT CAPTAINS HAD TAKEN MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS WITH THE RESULTING INCIDENTS. NOW STARKIST WAS COMPLYING WITH THE PENALTIES AND, IN FACT, HAD NOT EVEN APPEALED THE DECISIONS ON THE LAST TWO VESSELS (A.K. STROM AND NEPTUNE) BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO GET ON WITH THINGS. MOREOVER, STARKIST VICE-PRESIDENT WAS CONSIDERING VISIT TO ECUADOR IN NEXT 30 TO 60 DAYS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF ASSOCIATION CONTRACT WITH ECUADOREAN STATE FISHING CORPORATION (EPNA) AND NIZETICH HOPED MINISTER WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH HIM. IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT NEZETICH WAS ASKING THAT GOE RECONSIDER ITS DECISION TO DENY A.K. STROM AND OCEAN QUEEN A ONE-TIME EXCEPTION TO BAN ON ISSUANCE OF LICENSES TO VESSELS OVER 600 NRT, ESPECIALLY SINCE THESE BOATS NEEDED TO FISH TO RECOUP ENORMOUS FINES.

5. SALAZAR RESPONDED THAT HE REGRETTED THAT APPLICATION OF ECUADOREAN LAW HAD BROUGHT US INTO THIS SITUATION AND MADE A POINT OF STATING THAT GOE ACTION WAS NOT IN RETALIATION TO US TRADE REFORM ACT, AS SOME HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLEGED. GOE IS SIMPLY APPLYING ITS LAW AND IN THIS CONNECTION SALAZAR SAID HE REGRETTED THAT EXCEPTION COULD NOT BE MADE TO 600 TON RULE.

6. AS FOR ASSOCIATION POSSIBILITIES, SALAZAR SAID THAT GOE WAS INDEED INTERESTED IN THIS APPROACH AND, BEFORE ANY VISIT BY HIGHER STARKIST OFFICIALS, WOULD WELCOME A WRITTEN PROPOSAL FROM STARKIST GIVING BASIC OUTLINE

OF POSSIBLE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT. SALAZAR EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO MEET STARKIST VICE-PRESIDENT SHOULD HE COME TO QUITO. HE DID OBSERVE, HOWEVER, THAT IMMEDIATE FUTURE WAS PROBABLY NOT MOST PROPITIOUS TIME FOR SUCH A VISIT SINCE IT WAS BETTER TO LET ATMOSPHERE COOL A BIT FIRST. SALAZAR SAID HE THOUGH THAT PROSPECT OF ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH US FIRM WOULD ONLY BE WELCOME TO ECUADOREAN PUBLIC OPINION AFTER A REASONABLE PERIOD HAD ELAPSED WITHOUT ANY SEIZURES. SALAZAR DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT HE THOUGHT SUCH A REASONABLE PERIOD WOULD BE BUT HE CONCLUDED BY AGAIN ENCOURAGING NIZETICH TO SUBMIT AN ASSOCIATION PROPOSAL TO HIM IN WRITING. BREWSTER

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